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**Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church**

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*I lift up my eyes to the hills – from where will my help come?*

*My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth*.

*~ Psalm 121:1 ~*

Dear Trinity Family,

In these as in all days we turn our eyes to the LORD, our Maker and Preserver, the one who gave us life and who sustains us now and forever. We take comfort and courage in the knowledge that God is present in this time even before we are, suffering with those who suffer, bearing the burden of those weighed down by depression, anxiety, and isolation, making his Kingdom to come.

Confident of this, Trinity continues to carry out the work of God’s Kingdom in our community, even if due to the spread of coronavirus we must make some modifications to our usual ways of doing this. First and foremost, we continue to worship, affirming how important it is to proclaim the Word of God in every season, especially in uncertain times. But our form of worship will change for a bit. We will not gather for the time being on Saturday evenings, and at least for Sunday, March 22 and Sunday, March 29 we will worship only via livestream. There will be no in-person services.

Please contact the church office for instructions about accessing the livestream, or connecting to a recording of it on our webpage. We will mail worship bulletins to our homebound members.

Some have asked about offerings. We recognize that this is an important part of worship, and invite you to consider taking advantage of the opportunity to give online through our website or through our mobile app. Feel free to contact our financial secretary, Sue Derk, with any questions about how to do so, or reach out to the church office. Offerings can always be mailed to the church, or dropped off at a later date.

Our office staff will function as “communication central,” although our office hours will be reduced. Starting Wednesday, March 18, office staff will mostly be working from home.

Our office manager, Christie Brown, will continue to monitor emails and voice messages regularly. And Pastor Arlyn and I will be available via email and cell phone (Pastor Arlyn’s cell is 605-840-2865, and Pastor Aaron’s is 720-448-5228).

Besides these changes, Trinity’s council voted to restrict access to our building until further notice. No outside groups will be allowed use of the facility, and committees are instructed to carry out their work via email or digital conferencing. Sunday School also is suspended, although Pastor Arlyn will work with the Learning Committee to distribute take-home instructional and activity sheets. He and I also will brainstorm innovative ways of carrying forward the faith formation of our youth.

Pastor Ruth and I are discussing ways to keep our ministry to homebound members active. Assisted living facilities in our area are now restricting our ability to visit; we will, at the least, work with onsite chaplains and ramp up phone visits.

As I mentioned in worship on Sunday, our church is participating in the borough’s response plan: we have agreed to prepare and deliver meals to those in special need if requested by the borough to do so. I also am in conversation with area pastors about the ways that we might meet needs of folks in our various communities. Information will be forthcoming if and when such initiatives take shape.

Because the situation remains fluid, the church’s council and executive council plan to be in regular communication and meet often, electronically if necessary. We will share developments as they emerge.

And I will endeavor to reach out regularly with communications like this. I also will be joining you in prayer for our church, our community, our public officials, those who have already been affected by COVID-19 and those who will be, here and abroad.

This is still the season of Lent. In Christ Jesus, by his Spirit, God is still very much with us. May we continue to prepare our hearts and minds for the renewing grace of resurrection-life awaiting us as Easter people.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Aaron